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EFFECTS OF INDUSTRIALISM UPON POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IDEAS

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Much nonsense has been written about the New South. Every change in form has been hailed as a change in substance and we have been told many times that the Old South is dead, and that a new and entirely different South has risen from the ruins. These expressions have been generally the product of imagination and hope rather than of reality and fact. That acute, though often unfair, critic of southern life and institutions, Judge Tourgée, well said, in speaking of the Civil War, "It modified the form of society in the South but not its essential attributes." Never were truer words spoken. Reconstruction intensified prejudices previously existing and transformed them into fixed convictions.

There has been, and is still, a distinct line of separation between North and South which cannot be wiped out in one generation nor in two. During the Spanish war the sanguine again announced the final closing of the "bloody chasm." Those who were not carried away by their emotions smiled at the childish trustfulness that the acceptance of commissions by a few old Confederate leaders, and service under the flag by a few thousand young men would obliterate traits of character and a habit of mind that had been developing for centuries.

This does not mean that the people of the South are not loyal to the Union, but that they are provincial, and, like all provincials, they are prejudiced. The fact that other sections are also provincial is not the point at issue. The population has developed *in situ*. The proportion of foreign immigration is negligible—in North Carolina less than one-half of one per cent. There are few large cities. Every one knows his neighbors. In such communities public opinion is a power not to be ignored. Men hold steadfastly to opinions, which may be only prejudices, but they are willing to go to the stake for them, and their influence steadies the wavering. There are "accelerators" of public opinion to be sure, politicians

and editors whose stock in trade has been blowing the fires of sectionalism, but they could not continue to exist if they did not have followers.

The southerner often preserves his leading traits when transplanted and passes them on to his children. The most distinctly southern man I know, now sixty years old, has lived in New York since he was fourteen, though he spends a part of every year in his old home. On the other hand, the South has always swallowed up those who came to dwell within her borders. The children and grandchildren of New Englanders are more intense in feeling than the old stock. There is a fascination about the land which few can resist unless engaged in "missionary" work of one sort or another.

Speaking broadly the southerner has been since the days of reconstruction, a Democrat simply because he was white and not because he consciously accepted any body of economic or political theory, though perhaps his individualism felt that the best government was that which governed least. Because of this devotion to the word Democracy, no matter what the content, the southern states have had little influence in the national conventions of the party, since it has been assumed that their votes were safe regardless of platform or candidates. The local government has held the place of supreme importance, and because the policy of the Republican party threatened, or seemed to threaten, white supremacy, all else was insignificant. Almost invariably the northern man who cast his lot in the South has voted with his neighbors in local elections, even though claiming allegiance to another party in national affairs.

There has been, and yet exists, in the section as a whole a deep-rooted feeling of antagonism to other sections of the country, even though it may not always be articulate. No one who really knows the South can truthfully deny the fact, which is instinctively shown in matters apparently trivial, even by the more intelligent portion of a community. One reason is evident. Since the stability of the whole social structure has seemed to depend upon political solidarity, departure from the accepted canons could not be judged as nothing more than an intellectual difference of opinion, but was necessarily regarded as black treason to one's own race. To what extent generations to come may justify this instinctive intolerance, only the future can determine. We are too near and too much

prejudiced to give a judgment worth recording. The fact remains and it is to be explained, not excused nor denounced.

Intolerance cannot be confined to one compartment of the human nor one division of its interests. Where the right of man to give expression to free thought is denied in one thing almost certainly will it be refused in others. Whatever of Puritanism in thought and life yet remains in this country exists in the South, and even where strictness of life is lacking, orthodoxy in belief has persisted. The preacher has been a power in the South as well as in New England, and generally his voice has not been raised in advocacy of a broader life, but for one more intense. In all these matters pressure, denunciation or patronage from without has had no effect other than to intensify convictions previously existing.

For twenty years, however, a silent force, almost unnoticed, has been working, and only recently have some of its real effects been discovered, if indeed they may be said to have been discovered at all. Some of the southern states are rapidly becoming industrial communities. South Carolina is now the second state in the manufacture of cotton, North Carolina, third, and Georgia is not far behind. The mills of the cotton-growing states consume as many bales as those in all other states. Lumbering and mining grow increasingly important. Another Pittsburg is growing up in Alabama. The world buys tobacco grown and manufactured in the South, and the furniture industry grows with wonderful rapidity. The despised cotton seed furnishes oil, stock food, and fertilizer worth more than one hundred million dollars a year. In fact in almost every village in some sections of the South are one or more manufacturing enterprises which seek more than a local market for their products.

One town, with which I am familiar, has grown in population from 2,300 to more than 6,000 since 1890, but the annual output of manufactured goods has grown from less than \$250,000 to more than \$3,000,000. Only an insignificant part of the capital invested has come from without, and only a few skilled employees have been imported. The capital and the labor both were secured from the town itself and the surrounding country.

Money is more plentiful. Dozens of men receive salaries greater than the highest paid twenty years ago, and though the cost of living has increased greatly, particularly since 1900, salaries

have, on the whole, increased faster. Everywhere, at least in the Atlantic states, are towns, the growth of which has been similar. In such towns the old bottles cannot contain the new wine. The successful manager of a great enterprise cannot be ignored, politically or socially, and a new type is developing.

This "southern Yankee" is shrewd, cold, far-sighted, and is able to hold his own in any contest. He cannot be accused of exhibiting "southern sentimentalism." Sometimes he is a member of a family ruined by the war, who has been embittered by his struggle for independence. Instead of political ambition, he has a desire for financial power. Sometimes he has come up from generations of poverty. He feels himself a force and the sensation is pleasant. Since money has brought him this increased consideration, he is willing to bend all his energies to getting more money, and millionaires are no longer unknown. This type is by no means universal nor even common. Most employers are men of the older type, charged with greater responsibilities, and the freedom of southern industry from labor disputes has been due in a great measure to the personal interest of the employer in his operatives; but the newer type is increasing in number yearly.

Social lines are shifting. Often the ambitious families of the successful business man, newly arrived, break through any existing social barriers, and even attempt to assume leadership. In some sections there are signs of a new, would-be aristocracy, such as exists elsewhere, based upon wealth and business success rather than upon breeding, or public service, contrary to the traditions of the old South which never accorded social prominence to wealth alone.

The ideal of success is changing. Years ago the restless young college man, conscious of his powers and desirous of exercising them, turned to law and politics as a mode of expression. Now every year a larger proportion of high-school and college graduates turn to business and manufacturing. Engineering and scientific courses grow more popular, and hundreds of young men of professional ancestry pass through the grime of machine shops.

As said above, the operatives and employees of the manufacturing establishments have been drawn chiefly from the farms, or are only one generation removed. Some owned their land, others were renters, few were hired laborers. In the country the families

were isolated, and sometimes no outsider other than a chance passer-by was seen for days. Now they are crowded together in factory villages where they may talk from house to house. Yesterday they produced raw material for others to fashion; to-day they fashion it themselves. They spend the greater part of their waking time tending complicated machinery within walls instead of working with a few simple tools in the open air. They receive their pay in wages instead of in the products of the soil. In the country, usually it made no particular difference whether a task was done one day or the next, and a holiday could be taken without apparent loss. In the mill or factory, loss of wages and the overseer's displeasure follow any departure from absolute regularity.

Such a radical change in manner of life has affected them, socially, religiously and politically. The dormant social instinct first develops and they become gregarious. Solitude, once no hardship, becomes unendurable. Though hundreds of families come to the factories with the avowed intention of saving money to pay a mortgage, or to buy a farm, in rare cases does a family return to the country. Occasionally when work is slack a family may go back, but seldom remains permanently. It is simply another phase of that feeling which is building the city at the expense of the rural districts in every part of the country.

In the country practically every family was connected with some religious organization. It is the universal testimony of students of social conditions that the church is not holding its own among the industrial population. In the country the monthly or semi-monthly church services afforded the chief opportunity for social intercourse. In the town these services are no longer so important from a social standpoint, and more and more Sunday is spent as a day of rest. This does not mean that a "continental Sunday" or anything approaching it has developed in the South, but a gradual loss of interest in religious observances by the industrial population as a whole is undoubted.

There are signs of a stirring class-consciousness. The factory population in the sections where manufacturing has been longest established, at least, is beginning to think of itself as a class with distinct interests, and can no longer be depended upon to vote regularly. So far socialism has made small appeal, because they are too close to the land, and a land-owning population is not

socialistic. A class not yet conscious of itself affords sterile ground for labor organizations, and only the most intelligent and most skilled trades are organized. In many cases the employers have been able to break up the newer organizations, almost without trouble, as the organizations of textile workers in North Carolina were broken in 1900 and 1901. A population so strongly individual and so conservative is not yet ready to sink personal independence in an organization, the benefits of which are not fully comprehended.

That strong unions will be organized finally no one can doubt. When the inevitable contest comes, the operatives will suffer more at first from the loss of the personal kindliness of the employers than they gain in wages. The unions will be powerful. The men are physically fearless, they are native to the soil, are capable of sacrifice for an idea, and then there is always the land to which they may return if beaten.

All through the manufacturing districts of the South there is political unrest, though so far little of it has been translated into Republican votes. In some sections, however, the business interests are beginning to vote more independently, though perhaps maintaining the appearance of party regularity. The "vest-pocket" vote is growing. At the last election North Carolina chose three Republican congressmen. The mountain district has been debatable for years. Across the Blue Ridge Mountains few slaves were owned, and enthusiasm for the Confederacy was not strong. It has been jocularly said that in one county neither a Negro nor a Democrat was permitted to live. While the statement is exaggerated the white Republican majority is overwhelming and the number of Negroes is negligible. Another district includes both industrial and mountain counties, and the former Democratic incumbent could not maintain his hold upon the combination. In the other district, a successful business man belonging to one of the foremost families of the state was elected to succeed the present Democratic governor. While factional fights within the dominant party influenced the result to some extent, the "business vote" was the deciding element.

More significant perhaps is the fact that in Louisiana it is apparently possible to reconcile Democratic regularity with consistent votes for every schedule of the tariff bill framed by the Republican party. In North Carolina also all except one of the Democratic members of Congress voted against free lumber though

demand in the national platform, and it has not been charged that they expected better committee assignments in return. While some newspapers, and some sticklers for regularity have attacked their course, they seem to be confident of the approval of their constituents. It is reported that the bolting members from Georgia and Florida likewise expect to be indorsed.

The influence of the new spirit may be seen within the dominant party. A Confederate record no longer outweighs all other considerations. Until a few years ago old soldiers as a matter of course took the more important offices. Since a large proportion of the best blood and brain was in the service of the Confederacy, such a state of affairs was natural for a considerable period after the close of the struggle. As young men of promise grew up, however, many felt it an injustice that their claim of superior fitness was ignored because of an opponent's military record though this impatience was not always loudly proclaimed. For four years, possibly more, not a single member of the House of Representatives from North Carolina was a soldier. The younger men have held the governorship and the senatorships for a much longer time though in every convention and legislature the claims of veterans have been advocated. These men have not been defeated because they were soldiers, but in spite of the fact. It means simply that a military record no longer outweighs all other considerations. To a greater or less degree a similar state of affairs exists in other southern states.

Industrialism cannot be credited with bringing about this change, though it has had its influence. The business interests are not yet openly in politics, though the railroads are charged with attempting to influence conventions in some states. The rise of the "wool-hat" man has had more influence than any other single force. However, the discussion of the increasing influence of the small farmer and his descendants, once somewhat inarticulate, does not properly come within the province of this paper, interesting as the subject is. It is enough to say that whatever control of political affairs was exercised by a few prominent families in various states in the past has been lost.

As regards certain phases of the Negro question, opinion, conviction—call it what you will—is fixed, and an absolute making over of all southern society would be required before any considerable

change would appear. In other phases the Negro's position grows harder on the whole. The great industrial expansion has in many districts created a distinct shortage of labor and wages have risen greatly. This rise in wages has, generally speaking, not been followed by increased efficiency, but rather the reverse. Too many Negroes are content with the minimum of subsistence. If three days' work at the increased wages furnish this for a week, the laborer has often idled the other three. In some sections the servant question is becoming acute. Until a few years ago, servants, such as they were, could be easily obtained at low wages. Though wages have doubled within ten years it is the universal testimony that service rendered is not more satisfactory, and hotels and boarding houses are substituting white help where practicable.

More and more, efficiency counts with the employer, and by the efficiency test the Negro fails. The old slave-holding class had a real affection for the Negro, and overlooked or excused his shortcomings. Their children are less tolerant and the descendants of the non-slaveholders, who in many cases control employment, are inclined to hold the Negroes to still stricter account in every way. These have no inherited sense of responsibility for the welfare of the black to soften their judgments. The individual Negroes who order their lives in accordance with the accepted standards of good citizenship are increasingly respected by the better element among the whites, but the lazy and the thriftless are in more danger of feeling the weight of the criminal law.

With rare exceptions the right of the Negro to work at any sort of manual or mechanical labor has not been questioned. Negro carpenters, masons, plumbers, blacksmiths, etc., work beside whites in almost every southern town. On the farms the white and black work together as a matter of course. The employment of Negroes in establishments where they would work beside white women is an entirely different matter. With the industrial development, and to some extent, as a result of it, instances of opposition to the employment of Negroes in the trades have recently appeared. In some cases the collision has been precipitated by labor organizers from the North where Negroes are not admitted to many unions. The final result will depend, to a large extent, upon the development of efficiency in the race. The employer will protect the Negro's right to work if he deserves it. Otherwise he will be confined to personal and domestic service as in other sections of the country.

Only a few interesting features of an interesting section have been touched in this brief paper. No discussion of the South, as a whole, can be universally true, since some states or parts of states have not felt the development, while on the other hand additional space might be devoted to other divisions. As a whole the South is being profoundly influenced by the transfer of a rural population to factory villages. The next generation will exhibit more striking and more far-reaching changes since manufacturing communities tend toward a type. What no amount of coercion could accomplish is being done by the silent working of economic forces. Commercialism is doing what bayonets could not do.